

FRENCH BROAD OVERVIEW

The French Broad Overview begins just north of Asheville in Weaverville, first settled in the 1700s. This small town was called Pine Cabin until its incorporation in 1850. It is also the site of the Vance Birthplace State Historic Site. Zebulon B. Vance was North Carolina's Civil War governor from 1862–1865. He also served in the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives. In addition to information about Vance, the historic site offers presentations on early mountain settler life.

Begin following the byway by taking I-26 West from Asheville to Exit 19 in Weaverville. From the interchange, take the U.S. 25/70 Bypass toward Marshall. Turn left at the first stoplight onto Monticello Road (S.R. 1727).

Follow Monticello Road for three miles through a rural residential area until it ends at N.C. 251. Along this road, notice the French Broad River as it makes its way west. The river was named for the French who inhabited this region during the 18th century. During the summer months, the French Broad River is a popular site for white-water rafting and canoeing. **Turn right onto N.C. 251**

near the community of Alexander.

Established in 1828, Alexander was named for the owner of a local stagecoach tavern.

This road, like many others in river valleys, was built following old Indian trading paths that led to trading posts and villages in the Tennessee and Ohio River valleys. Note the palisades, or sheer rock walls, that line the right side of the road. Over time, the wide river cut away at the rock valley walls. Migrating animals and American Indians used this passage to cross through the Eastern United States'

tallest mountains. When European settlers arrived, they also followed the river valleys and paths set by those before them and widened the paths into roads. With the arrival of trains, river valleys again provided the path of least resistance.

While following the French Broad River, a railroad is visible on the other side of the river. Near Marshall, the tracks cross the river and parallel the road.

Continue following N.C. 251 after it joins U.S. 25/70 Business into Marshall. Established in 1852 and named for former U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall, it is the Madison County seat. For the best view of the courthouse, turn



Downtown Marshall